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AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
Late Proceedings
IN THE
COUNCIL
OF THE
Royal Society,

IN ORDER
To Remove from Gresham-College
into Crane-Court, in Fleet-Street.

In a Letter to a Friend.

L O N D O N:
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ACCOUNT
Of the Late
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YOU desire an Account of the surprising Convulsions that have lately happen'd in the *Royal Society*. I can never deny any thing you Command: But, I fear, the *real Causes* that have produc'd these odd Effects, are bury'd too deep for me to reach. However I have endeavour'd to inform myself of all Particulars, amongst those whom I esteem'd most likely to have a perfect Knowledge of what past (at least *openly*) in their Debates, and whose Integrity I might confidently

fidently rely on. I shall therefore without further Ceremony, give you a History of the Facts and the Reasons alledged on both Sides (according to my Intelligence) with that freedom you expect from me.

Nov. 8. 1710. The *President* of the *Royal Society*, acquainted the *Council* that the Dwelling-house of the late Dr. *Brown*, in *Crane-Court*, in *Fleet-Street*, (being an Inheritance in *Fee Simple*) was to be Sold; and that he thought it would afford a very convenient Reception to the *Society*. Upon this Information (and other Motives concerted *beforehand*) a Committee was appointed to view, in order to Purchase it, for their Use.

A few Days after, the *President* Summon'd another Council to Meet at *Gresham College* upon *Saturday*, Sept. 16. at 12 a Clock: And upon *Tuesday* preceeding, at Night, he sent Orders to *Summon* also as many of the *Fellows* as were in Town, or could be found, to Meet at the same Time and Place. At this *Extraordinary Meeting* of the *Society* he told them, That they were without any *Being* of their own; that their continuing in *Gresham-College* was very Precarious; that Dr. *Brown's* House had been propos'd to 'em, and a Committee had view'd it; and that he thought

thought it very convenient for the Uses of the Society: He added, That he had call'd 'em thither that he might hear what *Objections* they had to offer *against the Proposal*, that the *Council* might consider of them and take their final Resolutions accordingly.

The profound Silence that follow'd, sufficiently exprest a general Surprize: Till the President (after a little while) begun the Debate; and addressing himself to some particular Members, ask'd their *Objections*. They told him, that the very *Embryo* of the *Society* had been form'd in *Gresham-College*, and that they kept their *Weekly Meeting* in that Place some time before they obtain'd the *Royal Charter of Incorporation*; that the *Society* had continu'd there almost ever since, even in their most flourishing Condition; that they yet enjoy'd the same Freedom and Conveniencies as formerly, without the least Disturbance or Impediment; that the present *Professors* of *Gresham-College*, are as willing as their Predecessors were before them, that the *Society* should continue long to enjoy the same Accommodation; and if any new Privileges could be reasonably desir'd, they might be assur'd to meet with a ready Compliance from Gentlemen of so much

much Learning and Ingenuity. And therefore they hop'd to hear the *Reasons* that induc'd him, and a few others who appear'd as zealous and earnest, to remove from thence. Till that Question was debated and determin'd, it was out of Season to enquire into the Inconveniences of the House he had recommended.

The *President* was not prepar'd (or, perhaps, not *instructed*) to enter upon that Debate: But freely (tho' methinks not very civilly) reply'd, That he had good *Reasons for their Removing, which he did not think proper to be given there.*

The *Acting Secretary*, who has engross'd the whole Management of the Society's Affairs into his own Hands, and despotically Directs the *President*, as well as every other Member, took upon him to relate a Fact, which he thought would determine every Vote. He told them, that One of the *Gresham* Committee ask'd Him, (not long ago) Why the *Royal Society* did not Remove from *Gresham-College*? Since the *City* had several times sent them Warning to that Purpose.

It was readily reply'd, that the *Professors* were the *Proprietors* of the *College*, and not the *City*; that the Gentleman mention'd had no *Authority* from that Com-

Committee for saying what was alledg'd; and that the *Committee* had no Proposal then before them that might, with any colour, occasion a new *Warning*. 'Twas true indeed, that (a few Years ago) a Bill was offer'd in Parliament, and past the House of Commons, for improving Sir *Thomas Gresbam's* Estate, by Building Tenements upon the Ground where the College now stands: But 'twas also True, that the Bill was not drawn up without the Consent of all the *Professors*; and that Care was taken to insert a Clause to erect convenient Houses for each of the Professors, and Common Rooms for Reading their Lectures. But when Sir *Thomas Gresbam's* Will and Estate were better understood, the Bill was dropt, and not one step has been made since towards the Prosecution of that Design. It was further observ'd to them, that if that Attempt should ever be Reviv'd, the *Society* would either be Provided for by the Act of Parliament, or at the worst the Affair must be long Depending; so that they would have time enough to Remove into a better House than that now under Consideration. They likewise Remonstrated to the *President*, that that Season of the Year, and the short Notice he had given
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of this *Meeting*, made it very improper to determine an Affair of so great *Importance to the Society* at that time: And therefore they mov'd that the Debate should be adjourn'd to St. *Andrew's-Day*, or at least to some other *Extraordinary Meeting*; which he might Summon at more leisure. This the *President* would not hear of. They therefore offer'd to give him their Opinion either by Ballotting, or Voting, *viva voce*, or any other way he would propose, and desir'd him accordingly to State the Question about their Removing from *Gresham-College*, which had been *Mov'd* and *Seconded*, and had been the Subject of their Debate. The *President* then rais'd a Doubt that they were not properly a *Meeting* of the *Society*, and that he ought not to put any Questions to 'em.

To some of those who had seen with what Resolution, (tho' without any Countenance from the Statutes, or from the Practice of any former *President*, of how great Quality soever,) he had run up the Authority of that Chair (almost every Week for some Months together) in the foregoing Spring (tho' (if my Information be right) not once to any of the Just

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and Wise Ends of his Office) this sudden *Scrupulosity* was a Subject of Mirth; but to others, of real Grief and Concern, for the Condition of that *Society*, that languish'd under so partial Administration. However they all suppress'd their Resentment, and assur'd him that the *Statutes* had vested him with Authority to *Summon Extraordinary Meetings* of the *Society* as well as of the *Council*. He had sent his *Summons*, and tho' the Notice was very short yet they had obey'd; and the *Meeting* was not contemptible either for the Number, or the Quality of the Persons, who Appear'd. And therefore they again press'd him to put the *Question*: But in vain; his *Scruples* were unmoveable. So that some of the Gentlemen with warmth enough ask'd him, To what purpose then he had call'd them thither? Upon which the *Meeting* broke up somewhat abruptly, and not only the *Members* of the *Society*, but most of those of the *Council* also, left the *President* with Dr. *Sloan*, Mr. *Waller*, and one or two more, to take such Measures at the *Council* as they best lik'd.

I cannot doubt but that the *President* was much surpris'd to see this *Meeting* of the *Society* so well fill'd. It was not

very probable that so many Members should be then in Town, and almost impossible, as he had concerted Matters, that Mr. *Hunt* could give them notice of the Time and Place. It was now not much beyond the Middle of the long Vacation, most of the Gentlemen were gone to the Assizes, or to refresh themselves in the free Air at their Country Seats, or else were soliciting their own or their Friends Elections which were then expected, or rather by that time certain, to be at hand. The usual *Printed Summons* upon this *extraordinary* Occasion could be of no Use to Mr. *Hunt*: And therefore he must write his circular Letters with his own Hand; which seems to be not very swift. He was further oblig'd to carry these Letters, when writ, to the most distant Parts of the Town, besides the usual Summons to the several Members of the *Council*: And yet he had but three Days allow'd by the *President* for all this Business; which is a great deal too much for a younger Man than Mr. *Hunt*, to run through in so short a time. However want of Notice was not insisted on: And therefore I must be excus'd if I here give way to a Suspicion that it was this *unexpected Appearance* of

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of so many Gentlemen, in whose Countenances he might easily read an alarm, not very propitious to the Designs on foot, that occasion'd his suddain *Scruplesity*. Fewer Fellows at that *Meeting*, and more of the *Party*, had without doubt pleas'd him well ; and their Concurrence with the *Resolutions* of the *Council* would have been of great Weight in all their Consultations: But so many Intruders, were neither welcome, nor fit to be trusted.

However unlucky this *Meeting* prov'd: the *President* did not want Courage to prosecute the Undertaking in which he had embark'd with the utmost Vigour. And indeed it was immediately visible at the next *Meeting* of the *Council*, on the *Wednesday* following, that effectual Care had been taken to give the finishing Stroke before they parted. Of the 14 Fellows that then appear'd, there were Two only who dissented ; and would not give up the Interest of the *Society*, which they apprehended was upon the Point of being undone, by such precipitate *Resolutions*. Several things were now repeated, and indeed more seasonably, than had been offer'd at the *Meeting* of the *Society*, out of due time : (which I therefore reserv'd for this Place) And some things new

produc'd. Those Gentlemen suggested that the Society had already lost very considerable Donations which would have been bestow'd upon them if they had been settled in a House they could call their own : And urg'd, that many Members from both Ends of the Town would meet with Ease in *Fleet-Street* (so near the Centre) that could not conveniently reach to *Gresham-College* ; That the House propos'd had been view'd not only by the Committee appointed by the Council to that End, but by Sir *Christopher Wren*, who had found it a strong and well built House that might be repair'd and fitted for the Reception of the Society at a small Charge ; That Money would be found to pay for it, and something would afterwards be left in the Treasury ; And Lastly, Dr. *Sloan* added, that he had us'd his Endeavours for several Years to find out a House for the Society, and he never could meet with one so fit for their Service as this ; He said the Gentleman who had the Disposal of it would not hearken to any Delays ; and if this Opportunity should be lost he did not see when they were likely to find another. On the other side it was objected, that the Society had long flourish'd in *Gresham-College* : And besides

besides it being in a very particular manner, under the Protection of the *Crown*, they ought not so suddainly to dispose and fix themselves till they had laid their Condition in a dutiful Manner before the *QUEEN*, and seen what Provision or Care would be taken for them from thence; That the Business and Studies of the Society being for the publick and not private Advantage were of that kind that cannot Thrive (scarce Live) but under the warm Influences of a Court; That the most of their Members were either Men of considerable Fortune and Quality as well as Learning, or such as make their Studies their Business; The latter would make any Place easie to 'em; and the former generally dwell near the Court, and would make no great difference between ordering their Coaches into *Fleet-Street*, or to *Gresham-College*, there not being many Minutes difference in point of Time, and not above a Mile in distance; Besides the *Royal Exchange*, having daily a much greater Concourse of Men of Business, was much more likely to draw them thither than any thing that generally happens in the Neighbourhood of the Inns of Court; That the House was mean and dark, and could not receive the Society
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in its present Circumstances, much less in the flourishing State it was once in, and to which 'tis to be hop'd it may again some time rise; That it is incapable of receiving either their useful and noble Collection of Books, or their Curiosities of Nature and Art, and perhaps not strong enough to bear them; That it is unfit for the most sorts of their Observations and Experiments: That it was impossible to judge rightly either of the Conveniency or Value of the House without a Plan, a Survey of it made by skilful Persons, sign'd by them, and a distinct Report of all Particulars deliver'd in in Writing, all verbal Accounts in such Cases being very uncertain; That whatever Sir *Christopher Wren* might say with relation to the Value of the necessary Repairs for a small Sum, 'tis certain he told them, that to fit the House for the Reception of the Society at their Anniversary and other extraordinary Meetings, to make their Library up two Pair of Stairs, and to build their Repository over the Stables, would cost 'em 2 or 300*l.* and after all 'twould be then too little without garbling both the one and the other; and indeed the President was forc'd to allow of this distinction in the Estimate, tho' that discovery

very was extorted from him with some difficulty. It was further objected, that the State of the Treasury had been long a Secret, and the Treasurer's Accounts not audited for a great while, tho' the Statutes (which the President is Sworn to see executed) requires that to be done five times every Year, and without that none but those who are admitted into that Secret, can say any thing to the Condition the Society may be in to make such a Purchase. But after all, whenever the Society shall find themselves under any occasion of removing from *Gresham-College*, for none yet appears, they cannot fail to meet with a strong well built House, of three Rooms on a Floor, with Coach-house, Stables, and a little Garden, in any Part of the Town.

The President thought fit to ruffle one of those Gentlemen who appear'd against this Bargain, and hastily to call upon him to acquaint them where they might find a better House than that propos'd. It could not surely be expected that any Fellow, without seeing or suspecting any Pretences for leaving *Gresham-College* (in such a hurry as if some Ghost had appear'd there to fright them) should carry a List in his Pocket of all the strong well

well built Houses of that bigness to be Sold in *London* or *Westminster*, to be produc'd whenever the President should call for it. But there being neither Argument nor good Manners in that Question it did not deserve a Reply.

The *Acting Secretary* related two Instances of the fruitless Application that the Society had made at Court, to prove that nothing is to be expected from thence. The First was made some Years ago, when a Bill was depending in Parliament for Leasing and Building the lately dissolv'd Hospital in the *Savoy*, for Part of that Ground. The other was, when a like Project was set on foot for pulling down the *Mense*, for a Part of this: But both times without Success. To this 'twas reply'd that it was a wrong Conclusion he had drawn from those Premises; the denial in both these Instances, where the Things they ask'd were not reasonable, or not in the Power of the Crown to grant, was far from proving any unwillingness in the Court to encourage their Undertakings: But rather show'd the Indiscretion of their Managers to make such unpracticable Proposals there.

The President was now upon the Point of putting an End to the Debate, when
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one of the Gentlemen address'd himself to him for the Favour of speaking a Word or two more. The President, who never willingly hears that Gentleman, took no notice, till the Secretary mov'd to hear him. This made the President turn towards him with some Warmth, and with an Air and Tone not very suitable to the Candour and Impartiality which might be expected from that Chair, ask'd him, What he had more to say? Whatever it was that that Gentleman had design'd to offer, such usage was sure to prevent it. He therefore modestly let it drop, and coldly desir'd to know, if the Council, by their Statutes, had Power enough to conclude the Bargain without the Consent of the Society at an extraordinary Meeting; which he hop'd was not an impertinent Question. This drew from the President an Account of the only Thing that seems reasonable in the whole Affair. He told them, that he had consulted with the present Attorney-General, who gave his Opinion, that tho' the whole Society had the Property of their Estate and Treasure by their Charter; yet the Powers for Ordering and Governing the Society, and Managing all their Affairs

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and Estate, are solely vested in the Council.

Tho' many things might have been objected to this Opinion, at least it would have been much better understood and more satisfactory, had it been deliver'd (as is usual in such Cases) in Writing. However the dissenting Gentlemen knew well enough that all would be determin'd by Dint of Voting, not Strength of Argument: And therefore they submitted to the Opinion of that truly Great Lawyer without further Hesitation. Upon which it was presently order'd, that the same Committee, who had been appointed before to view the House, should be now empower'd to Bargain for it, and another little one nearly adjoining to it, at any Price not exceeding 1450*l*. and that the same Committee should take care to have it repair'd and fitted up for the Reception of the Society with all speed. To both Parts of this Order Mr. *Lenthorp*'s Negative Ball was found single in the Balloting Box; Dr. *Cockburn* having given his Negative, *viva voce*, and refus'd to Ballot: Which the Secretary in his *Minutes* thought fit to take no notice of.

After this, *Sir*, you may believe nothing more remain'd to be done but to
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expedite the Conveyances, and pay the Money, as fast as possible. Accordingly in a few Days another Council was summon'd: And then 'twas resolv'd that towards the Purchase 450*l.* should be paid out of the Treasurer's Hands; That Sir *Godfrey Copley's* Legacy of 100*l.* should be apply'd to this Use, and that 900*l.* the Remainder of the Purchase Money, should be borrow'd upon a Mortgage of the Premises at 6*l.* *per Cent.* Interest. There was no Opposition at this Council; for those who entirely dissented from this whole Proceeding, thought fit to withdraw as soon as the President had acquainted them with the Occasion of their Meeting: And the rest order'd the Money to be paid, the Conveyances to be Seal'd with the Seal of the Society, and the Bargain to be ratify'd in Form; which was done accordingly. But whether, after the dissatisfy'd Members were withdrawn, there remain'd a Number sufficient according to the Charter and Statutes to make a Council (without which all that was done was, *ipso facto*, null and void) I shall not here enquire. Let those concern'd prepare to Answer for that Insult on the Constitution whenever they shall be call'd upon to give it, in a Court that

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will not be put off with false Glosses; which perhaps may be sooner than they are aware of.

The *President* was so elated with this *Success*, that he presently summon'd another Council to meet at the House in *Crane-Court*: And at the same time gave notice that the ordinary Meetings of the Society would begin there on *Wednesday, Nov. 8.* at the usual Hours; to which time (as 'tis enter'd by the Secretary in the Minutes) the PRESIDENT had ADJOURN'D them.

Thus, *Sir*, in Obedience to your Commands, I have given you a History of what past in this suddain Revolution. Wherein you see a Paradox, which perhaps few Gentlemen without Doors will be brought to believe, that 10 Men, (*viz.* Sir *Isaac Newton*, Mr. *Pitfield*, Dr. *Sloane*, Mr. *Hill*, Mr. *Waller*, Dr. *Arbutnot*, Dr. *Mead*, Mr. *Wren*, Mr. *Sam. Morland*, and Mr. *Isted*; I say that these 10) should have the Courage to involve the Society in a Debt of 900*l.* besides the 500*l.* which they have drawn out of the Treasurer's Hands; when only Four of them pay their own *Annual Contributions*, according to the Statutes, and their Ingagement at their Enterance into the Society.

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It cannot certainly but be thought strange that those who do not pay their own just Dues: or themselves contribute one Penny towards the Treasure of the Society, should be so very liberal and forward to dispose of it, besides the proper Purposes; as they have been upon this, and some other occasions, that I must not mention here.

And now, *Sir*, give me leave to insist a little more at large, upon two or three Particulars which have been already mentioned above. I confess to you, I do not read the Names of two Persons, so deservedly eminent in the *Law*, and for *Architecture*, without some Resentment, to see them prostituted to By-ends.

I have a much greater regard and deference to *Sir Edward Northey's* Opinion, than to pretend to make any Objections to it: But I may without offence (I hope) doubt, if all the Facts were fairly stated. No Man who has seen the *Charter* of the *Royal Society*, will dispute the Authority given to their *Council* to *manage all their Affairs, Estate and Treasure*: But there is a *Restriction* in a following Clause, that all their *Orders* shall be *Lawful and Reasonable*. This Proviso, as well as the very Nature of the Trust reposed in them, makes

makes them accountable for their *Irregular* and *Unreasonable Proceedings*. I shall therefore examine the Affair before us at this *Test*.

The *Society* have long enjoy'd all the Conveniencies *Gresham-College* could afford them. The *Great Hall*, to which the Ascent from the Court is by but a few Steps, is about 37 Foot long, near 20 Foot broad, and 25 or 30 Foot high. This spacious Room is a noble Entrance to the rest of their Apartments. The next Room, is about 35 Foot long, near 20 Foot broad, and 12 or 13 Foot high: And in this the *Society* always meet upon *St. Andrew's-Day* for their *Anniversary Elections*; and as oft as they please upon extraordinary Occasions. The inner Room, for their *ordinary Weekly Meetings*, is about 22 Foot long, and 18 Foot broad. These three Rooms are all upon the same Floor: From the last of these, two or three Steps conveys you into the *Gallery*; which is near 140 Foot long, and 13½ Foot broad. In this is preserv'd, the famous *Arundellian Library*; which is considerably augmented by a daily Addition of Modern Books. Beyond this, and two Passage-Rooms, is the *Repository* of their *Curiosities*; which, with the two Rooms adjoining, is about
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90 Foot long, and 12 or 12½ Foot broad. All these last mention'd Rooms are also upon the same Floor: And all of them, upon both Floors, are about 12 or 13 Foot high.

Besides all these commodious Rooms within, they have also the Use of a fair *Collonade* under the *Gallery* (being of the same Dimensions with it): And of a spacious *Area*, about 140 Foot long, and 107 Foot broad.

I shall next take a View of their *new Purchase*. The Approach to it, I confess, is very fair and handsome, thorow a long Court: But then, they have no other Property in this, than in the Street before it; and in a heavy Rain a Man can hardly escape being thoroughly wet, before he can pass through it. The Front of the *House* towards the Garden, is about 42 Foot long; but that towards *Crane-Court* not above 30 Foot. Upon the *Ground-floor*, there is a little Hall, the Dimensions whereof I have not met with; but I guess it is about 12 Foot broad, and 15 or 16 Foot long. There is also upon the same Floor a direct Passage from the Stairs into the Garden, about 4 or 5 Foot wide: And on each side of it a little Room about 15 Foot long, and 16 Foot broad. The
Stairs

Stairs are easie, which carry you up to the next Floor; Here there's a Room fronting the *Court*, directly over the *Hall*, and of the same Bigness: And towards the Garden is the *Meeting Room*, which is 16 Foot broad, and $25\frac{1}{2}$ Foot long, in the whole Front; but from the Chimney to the opposite Wainscot (which I take to be the only useful Length) 'tis little more than 22 Foot. At the End of this Room, there is another (also fronting the Garden) $12\frac{1}{2}$ Foot long, from the Partition Wall to the Chimney, and 16 Foot broad. The three Rooms upon the next Floor, are of the same Bigness with those I have last describ'd. These are all that are yet provided for the Reception of the *Society*: Except you will add the Garrets, a Platform of Lead over them, and the usual Cellars, &c. below; of which they have more and better at *Gresham College*, tho' I did not think them worth the Naming. But I must not forget to tell you, that the Garden is but 42 Foot long, and 27 Foot broad: And that the Coach-House and Stables are 40 Foot long, and 20 Foot broad.

When you have consider'd the Dimensions of the several Parts of this Building, you will be much at a loss to know, how the

the *Society* and their *Effects* can be dispos'd in it. The *Meeting Room* may admit about 20 or 25 *Fellows* to sit at ease: But 31 (without which Number they cannot by their *Charter* proceed to an *Anniversary Election* on *St. Andrew's-Day*) will be very much crouded in it. If more attend those *general Meetings*, (and every *Fellow* is under a particular *Engagement* to that Attendance by his *Subscription* when first admitted) they must be contented to withdraw into the adjoining Rooms, where they can neither see nor hear any thing that's transacted at the Table. All these Rooms must be reserv'd (and they too few) for the *Meetings* of the *Society*, and such *Experiments* (which are not many) that can be made within that Compass.

The Rooms upon the next Floor are design'd for the Library: But when I have describ'd the Number of their Books, you will easily perceive they cannot contain them. The Books are now preserv'd at *Gresham College*, in 45 Presses, each of which is near 3 Foot broad, and $6\frac{1}{2}$ Foot high; and therefore by a regular Distribution of them between the Windows, and along the Wainscot between the Doors, and by heightning the Presses to 10 Foot, 'tis possible to set up 36 of those Presses,

and I think not more, in all those Rooms. The remaining 9 Presses must be thrown into the Garrets; an Indignity to the Memory of *the Great Earl of Arundel*, not to be endur'd by any Men of *Honour* and *Learning*.

The Stable is to be turn'd into a *Repository*, for their *Collection of Curiosities*; And the Garden (where the *Sun* or *Planets* will seldom appear) is appropriated to *Astronomical Observations*; to which also the leaded Platform will be of some Use.

It was often urg'd in the late *Councils*, that Sir *Christopher Wren* had found it a *strong* House: But whether *strong* enough to carry the *Weight* that is to be brought into it, is not so clear. The outside Walls are 18 *Inches* thick; but I cannot learn that there's any Brick Partition Walls to support the Floors. Yet at a *general Meeting* there will be 70 or 80 *hundred* Weight upon the first Floor; and the Books and Presses, &c. will weigh 180 *hundred* upon the upper Floor and Garrets, so that the Walls must carry about 13 Tuns, besides the Roof, Floors, &c. a Weight, which I think will try the *Strength* of a House that has been built already near 40 Years.

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I shall not here examine how well the *Committee* have discharg'd their Trust in allowing 1450 *l.* to be a reasonable Price for the two Houses: But I cannot forbear to take notice of the round Estimate that (I am told) was made, at one of the *Meetings* of the *Council*, for erecting the Coach-House and Stable into a *Repository*. It was there said, that when those Walls were rais'd 6 or 7 Foot higher, there would be a spacious Room, fit for that Use: And that this might be done for about 200 *l.* And here Sir *Christopher Wren's* Authority was again apply'd to. After what manner they will finish the Room, and what it will Cost, they only know who have the Scheme before them: But the Project of *Raising* the Walls is altogether impracticable. The Wall towards the Garden is $1\frac{1}{2}$ Bricks thick, with no very good Foundation: And towards the Street there is no Wall at all. It is shut up on that side with Timber and Boards: just strong enough to carry its own slight Roof; so that whatever design they may have to Build there, it must be done wholly upon a *new Foundation*; and I fear will be found to Cost much more than the Sum propos'd.

Upon the whole Matter, it seems to me more than probable, that the Purchase of the Two Houses, with the necessary Repairs, Alterations and new Buildings, will Amount at least to 1800 *l.* And therefore, Deducting 300 *l.* for the Value of the Little House (which may perhaps be Let at 20 *l. per Annum*) the 1500 *l.* remaining is the Purchase of the Great One. This, in Buildings, is Equivalent to 110 *l. per Ann.* to which the Taxes, Parish-Duties, Poor-Rates, and Assurances being added, the Society will be at the Expences of 130 *l. per Ann.* And after all, their Habitation will be *Mean and Inconvenient*, in Comparison of what they have long enjoy'd in *Gresham-College*, without Paying any Thing at all, except only 12 *l. per Ann.* which is allow'd to One of the Professors for the Use of a private Room.

In short, Sir, if this *Management* of the Council be *Just or Reasonable*, let the World Judge. But if it be not a *Reasonable* or *Necessary* Expence, the Council has Acted beyond the *Powers* that were given them by the *Charter*; and they are Accountable somewhere for their *Mismanagement*.

But besides this *Proviso* in the *Charter*, which I have insisted on so long, the *Statutes* seem more directly to bring the Council

oil to an *Account* for their *Management* of the *Treasure* before the *Society*, *Annually*, at *St. Andrew's Day*. They require expressly, that the *President*, at One of the *Three ordinary Meetings* of the *Society* next before that Day, to appoint *Annually Five Fellows*, who are not of the *Council*, to *Audit the Treasurer's Accompts*, and to *Report them to the Society*. It cannot be supposed, that this *Provident Care* was taken by the *Compilers* of the *Statutes* to bring the *Accompts* under the *Cognizance* of the *Society*, as a *Matter* of mere *Curiosity*: No, surely; but to render all sorts of unfair *Combinations* between the *Treasurer* and the *Council* impracticable; to suppress all *Exorbitant Expenses*, and to correct any *Mismanagement* that such *Reports* shall bring before them.

Since therefore the *Society*, and consequently every *Member* thereof, has a *Right* by this *Statute* to be inform'd of the true *State* of their *Revenue*; methinks *Prudence* as well as *Justice* should have prevail'd upon the *President* in the late *Councils*, to have taken the *Consent* of the *Society* along with them, in an *Affair* of so great *Consequence*. It was treating them with an *Indignity*, scarce ever offer'd in any other *Society*, to reserve the *Motives* of the *Resolutions* they had (very probably if not certainly) already

ready taken, *in Petto*, when required by those who had a Right to know them.

I almost blush to think with what Industry and mean Arts the *Statute* for *Auditing the Accompts* is wont to be eluded. The Auditors indeed have been Annually appointed; but always so near the Anniversary Meeting, that either the *Treasurer* took care to be out of the way, or else it became impracticable to go through that intricate Affair before the Time allow'd for the Report was elaps'd. When that Day comes, so many of the *Auditors* are commonly Chosen of the *Council*, that they cease to be a *Statutable Committee*; and then all is safe for a Year longer. The long continuance of these and other like *Practices* have render'd the Statute almost obsolete: For which the *President* is much in Arrear to his *Honour* and to his *Oath*. He is *Sworn* to act *faithfully* in the Execution of his *Trust*, as *President* of the Society; and as such, he is requir'd, amongst other things, *to see the Statutes duly executed, and to call for the Reports of Committees*. 'Tis not enough for him to Name the Auditors; but he is further oblig'd to lay the Report before the Society.

But after all, Sir, perhaps you will ask me what *Remedy* the *Society* can have against

gainst the *Council* for any thing they have or may Act, not only without their Consent, but expressly against their Opinion; for refusing to hear it, methinks, is equivalent to that. To this, Sir, I might reply, that I have said enough, if I have convinc'd you, that the *Council* is *Accountable* to the *Society* for what they Act in the Disposal and Management of their Estate. If this be allow'd, it must also be allow'd that they are but Trustees; and as such, the Law is open to relieve every Breach of Trust they can be justly Charg'd with.

But if you think this Remedy too tedious, the *Society* hath another immediately in their own Power. All the Officers and near half the *Council* are Chosen Annually: St. Andrew's Day is at hand; If the *Society* be dissatisfy'd with the *present Administration*, let them choose a *new Ministry*. This cannot with any colour be complain'd of: since they have enjoy'd an uninterrupted Succession of Elections for a long Time. No Injury nor Indignity will by this be offer'd to 'em: But on the contrary, it will be a means to clear their Reputation. It cannot be deny'd, that their *dark Intimations*, and undue *Reservedness*, have given just occasion to entertain *Suspensions* not very favourable towards them. If the Cause of these

these Appearances be no worse than the effects of some Indiscretions, the Society may restore 'em with great Honour the next Election. But if there be really any *sinister Combinations*, or bad Designs, to *enslave the Society*, and to *Sacrifice* it to their *insolent Resentments*, the Fellows will be neither just to themselves nor the *Publick*, if they neglect this *Opportunity* of *Choosing new Officers*. A *new President*, *new Treasurer*, and a *new Secretary*, with the assistance of an *Honourable Wise Council*, will soon unravel all the Clue of the late intricate Proceedings: They will easily pursue them through all the Meanders of their dark Labyrinth, where they have secur'd themselves so many Years; and expose them to the just Indignation of the Society.

This, Sir, is an immediate Remedy; and as such, I leave it to your Consideration. If you think fit to Communicate these Sentiments with any of the *Fellows*, you may use your own Pleasure: I heartily wish the Success according to the Justice of their Cause.

I am,

S I R,

22 Nov.

1740.

Your Most Faithful

Humble Servant.

